

Title: **Setting the World on Fire**

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Chapter 1: Chapter 1

When she got the news, all she could do was stare, and wish that her hands would move to shield her eyes from the gaze of the messenger. But her hands remained still in her lap, and her feet firm upon the ground, because he had told her she should sit down. Had he known, then? That her entire being would burn with the need to run, to flee from the reality that confronted her?

"Please leave." She felt herself whisper. The messenger-nothing more than a boy barely older than turned and left.

She stared at the floor, and felt Abner's small weight settle against her neck.

"We knew this would happen." He said softly, his voice flat with the emotions neither of them were allowed to truly feel, because if they...

"I know." She whispered back. Her hands twitched in her lap, nails trying to dig into her palms, before smoothing out again in a jerky motion that was trying to contain the shaking in her soul.

Knowing didn't make it any better. Didn't lessen the pain that hung at the edge of her awareness, struggling to overwhelm her with its weight, and the claws it was forced to sheathe.

For minutes she couldn't count, they simply sat in silence, their thoughts shifting and turning, shying away from the pain that lay curled within her hearts, immobile, unable to do anything at all.

Then, finally, she closed her eyes, and promised herself that she would never allow herself to accept the pain that lay lurking inside her chest. If it was the last thing she did, she would undo the events that had happened that day.

She breathed in deeply, slowly, and stood, and opened her eyes. She left behind the room they had been given, and moved through the halls with singular determination, her daemon flitting before her to free the way of the clog of moving bodies that bustled past without noticing her.

When she finally found someone that knew what was going on, she reached out, and grabbed their arm before they could walk past her, and locked their gaze with her own. Their daemon, a large black dog, took a step backwards, and the young woman's eyes shifted focus as they landed on her.

So she could sense it, then. Amanda would have

smiled, if the pale emotion that flickered through her were anything at all relating to happiness.

"Give me a list of the dead." She said firmly.

The woman's eyes shifted again, back to their normal state, about to refuse, before she blinked, her brows furrowing as she saw her clearly, and nodded, her daemon twitching one of his floppy ears.

"I can make you a copy. Just follow me." The woman said, setting off back the way she had come.

And Amanda followed, feeling the ticking away of the world with every step she took. But it would conquer her no more. This was her world, even if it was wrong to the core, and she wasn't going to let it fade so easily.